1 <u>**CLAIM AMENDMENTS**</u>

2 <u>**Listing of Claims:**</u>

3 **CLAIMS**

4 1. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ for retrieving a replica of an electronic document in a

5 computer network, comprising:

6 • selecting at least one replica number,

7 • by applying a given function, ~~the function~~ requiring the replica number and a document

8 identifier as input: determining at least one entity identifier, each entity identifier representing

9 an entity in the network that might provide the replica,

10 • addressing a document related request to at least one of the identified entities.

11 2. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to claim 1, comprising

12 • selecting $k = N$ replica numbers, wherein N is a maximum number for replicas,

13 • by applying the given function k times: determining k entity identifiers.

14 3. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to claim 1, comprising

15 • selecting k replica numbers from a maximum number of N replicas with $k < N$, by applying

16 the given function k times: , and

17 • determining k entity identifiers.

18 4. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to claim 3, wherein $k <= 5$.

19 5. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to claim 3, wherein $k = 1$.

20 6. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to <u>claim 1</u> ~~any one of the preceding claims~~,

21 comprising addressing the document related request to all identified entities.

1   7. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to <u>claim 1</u> ~~any one of the preceding claims.~~

2   ~~1 to 4,~~ comprising addressing the document related request to only selected ones of the identified

3   entities.

4   8. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to <u>claim 1</u> ~~any one of the preceding claims1~~

5   ~~to 4,~~ comprising addressing the document related request only to one entity selected from the

6   identified entities.

7   9. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to <u>claim 1</u> ~~any one of the preceding claims 1~~

8   ~~to 5,~~ <u>further</u> comprising

9   calculating a cost function for each of the k entities, the cost function providing a cost value as

10   result which indicates a cost to address the relevant entity.

11   10. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to ~~claim 9 in combination with~~ claim 7 ~~or~~

12   ~~claim 8,~~

13   <u>further comprising calculating a cost function for each of the k entities, the cost function</u>

14   <u>providing a cost value as result which indicates a cost to address the relevant entity,</u> wherein each

15   entity to be addressed is selected from the identified entities due to ~~the~~ <u>an</u> associated cost value.

16   11. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to claim 10, wherein ~~the~~ addressed

17   ~~entity/~~entities ~~is/are the one/s~~ <u>consist of at least one entity</u> showing ~~the~~ <u>a</u> lowest cost value/s.

18   12. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to claim 6 ~~or claim 7,~~ wherein cost values

19   for the addressed entities are derived from communication with these entities.

20   13. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to claim 6 ~~or claim 7,~~ wherein cost values

21   for the addressed entities are derived from a cost database.

22   14. (currently amended) <u>A method</u> ~~Method~~ according to <u>claim 1</u> ~~any one of the preceding claims,~~

1   wherein upon receiving a "replica not available" response from each of the addressed entities,

2   another entity is selected from the identified entities for addressing the document related request

3   to.

4   15. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 14,

5   wherein the other entity is selected from the identified entities by choosing an entity with an

6   associated replica number that is lower than the replica number associated to the entity/entities

7   the previous request was addressed to

8   16. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~,

9   wherein upon any indication from the addressed entity/entities that neither the replica is not

10   available nor the replica is available there, another entity is selected from the identified entities

11   for addressing the document related request to.

12   17. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 16,

13   wherein the other entity is selected due to an associated cost value.

14   18. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 1 ~~any one of the claims 1 to 4~~,

15   further comprising

16   •   selecting from the identified entities at least one most preferred entity, and

17   •   addressing the document related request to each most preferred entity.

18   19. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 18,

19   wherein each most preferred entity is selected according to ~~its~~ said each most preferred entity's

20   distance from the retrieving entity.

21   20. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 19,

22   wherein the distance of an entity is derived from the associated entity identifier.

1   21. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 18 ~~any one of the preceding~~

2   ~~claims 18 to 20,~~

3   wherein upon receiving a "replica not available" message from the addressed entity, at least one

4   other entity is selected from a set of identified entities as a second best preferred entity for

5   addressing the document related request to, this set of identified entities being limited to entities

6   with corresponding replica numbers lower than the replica number that is associated to the most

7   preferred entity identifier.

8   22. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 19,

9   wherein the second preferred entity is selected from the set of identified entities according to its

10   distance from the retrieving entity, wherein the closest distance is derived from the associated

11   entity identifier.

12   23. (currently amended) A computer program element comprising computer program code means

13   which, when loaded in a processor unit of a computing entity, configures the processor unit to

14   perform a method as claimed in claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~.

15   24. (currently amended) A computing ~~Computing~~ entity for retrieving a replica of an electronic

16   document in a computer network, comprising a control unit designed to perform a method

17   according to claim 1 ~~any one of the claims 1 to 22~~.

18   25. (currently amended) A method ~~Method~~ for depositing a replica of an electronic document in a

19   computer network,

20   • selecting a replica number,

21   • by applying a given function, ~~the function~~ requiring the replica number and a document

22   identifier as input: determining an entity identifier, the entity identifier representing an entity

23   in the network,

24   • addressing the identified entity for replica depositing purposes.

1   26. (currently amended) A computer program element comprising computer program code means

2   which, when loaded in a processor unit of a computing entity, configures the processor unit to

3   perform a method as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding~~ claim 25.

4   27. (currently amended) A computing ~~Computing~~ entity for depositing a replica of an electronic

5   document in a computer network, comprising a control unit designed to perform a method

6   according to claim 25.

7   28. (new) An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer

8   readable program code means embodied therein for causing retrieval of a replica of an electronic

9   document in a computer network,, the computer readable program code means in said article of

10   manufacture comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect

11   the steps of claim 1.

12   29. (new) An apparatus to retrieve a replica of an electronic document in a computer network,

13   comprising:

14   • selecting at least one replica number,

15   • by applying a given function employing the replica number and a document identifier as

16   input, determining at least one entity identifier, each entity identifier representing an entity in

17   the network that might provide the replica,

18   • addressing a document related request to at least one of the identified entities.

19   30. A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer

20   readable program code means embodied therein for causing retrieval of a replica of an electronic

21   document in a computer network, the computer readable program code means in said computer

22   program product comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to

23   effect the functions of claim 29.